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Stimulating Interests and Appreciation Through Reading*

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I KNOW of no better way to induce a spirit of humility in a worker in the field of research than to give him the topic assigned to me and assume that he will proceed on the basis of evidence. For I realize that this audience shares the sentiments of one of my colleagues who said to a master's candidate in a recent oral examination, "What I want is not a Woman's Club speech. I want the *facts*."

I have paid my respects to the research in the field, but I am forced to admit that it has little to offer. In the first place, research into children's interests in reading deals with large numbers of children, the larger the better, and what it presents is averages. But you and I know that the problem of reading guidance is a problem of understanding the needs and the interests of the individual child. For this purpose, extremes have as much to offer as averages. On the other hand, the studies in appreciation that I have examined have been almost solely concerned with the appreciation of poetry, perhaps because teachers are disturbed by the fact that they have little success in

raising boys and girls to higher levels of appreciation of verse. Experimentors have been concerned primarily with analyzing the factors that differentiate great poetry from poor poetry—poetic vision, for example, poetic melody, or poetic diction. Then they have carried on investigations to determine whether oral or silent reading of verse or an ideal as contrasted with a technical approach to poetry produces the better results on a final examination in which pupils are asked to distinguish verse which is devoid of poetical qualities from parallel passages on the same theme which represent a high degree of excellence in poetical expression.

Each of these types of studies has been helpful in its turn; but all the time the real problems that you and I face in guiding the individual child in his reading remain unsolved. In the final analysis, appreciation is *personal acceptance of worth*. If this be true, there are two things that matter—the individual child, what he is at the moment; and the individual book, what it offers that has value for him at his peculiar stage of development. We need teachers to help us

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in this next step in research to study the interaction of the individual child and his needs and the individual book and what it presents in the way of experience. In the first place, we need to study the urges that send children to books for satisfaction and stimulation, the immediate interests that furnish leads for reading guidance. We need to make records also of those accidents of stimulation which occur so frequently in the experience of each one of us, in order that we may make of them permanent means of approach to reading.

In the second place, we need to know books thoroughly and to record very specifically the types of experiences they offer to boys and girls. A college boy who went into the toy department of a Minneapolis store during the Christmas rush, sold so many more toys than the regular salesmen that inquiry was made into the methods he had used. His only explanation was, "Well, you see, I discovered that people come in and say things like this: 'I want a toy for an eight-year-old boy who is interested in things mechanical,' so I got down here half an hour early for three mornings in succession and *looked over the stock with different kinds of boys and girls in mind.*" Reading guidance is not quite so simple as that, but we shall be at a standstill in both research and guidance until we take time out to "look over our stock with different kinds of boys and girls in mind."

Whoever is in a position to examine the work sheets of any large investigation of children's interests in reading is impressed with the fact that in many instances research workers who are attempting to classify books do not know what is in them. We need teachers who actually use the books with children to help us make a comprehensive analysis of the kinds of experiences that individual books have to

offer. For example, the story of *Caddie Woodlawn* would normally be classified as a story of pioneer days in Wisconsin. That signifies its usefulness for a social studies unit, but it does practically nothing with its reading interest value for the individual child. Psychologically, *Caddie Woodlawn* is the story of a girl who doesn't want to grow up to be a lady—until a father, sympathetically drawn by the author, helps her to alter her conception of what it means to be a lady, and to yield almost willingly to the inevitable. It is a story of family life, in which boys and girls adjust to each other, parents to children, and the East to the pioneer West. It contains the revelation of the little girl in the family, spurned by the older ones, and seeking compensation for her loneliness after the death of the brother nearest her own age, by running constantly to her mother, with tales about the older ones. Or, to analyze it from a totally different point of view, it contains at least one hairbreath escape from Indians, a courageous ride of a girl adjudged worthy of a scalpbelt by the chief-tain, and a scene of reconciliation between the Indians and the whites which might make an excellent dramatization for any peace program of today. Can we not exert our influence to persuade teachers to acquaint themselves with books, and to record for us the kinds of experiences each one offers to boys and girls?

In the main, books hold three kinds of interest for children. They evoke memories of the child's own everyday experiences, heightened and interpreted by the power of the imagination. They help the child to enter into imaginary experiences in line with his hopes and his desires. It is this particular need that keeps many a cheap juvenile alive, for in it boys and girls of the same age as the youthful reader do surpassing things. Finally,

books furnish the child an opportunity for projecting himself into new and fuller ranges of thought and feeling. It is in this realm that the teacher of wide acquaintance with books can make significant contributions to the broadening of interests among boys and girls.

Nothing that has been said on this subject has impressed me more than the story of ten years of the Junior Literary Guild and its efforts to stimulate new and broader interests in books among individual children. "Boys and girls," writes Helen Ferris, "know what they want. But they are immature. They are not aware of their own potential reading interests until we who are older bring them in contact with many varied possibilities. Then they find their own. And they experience the thrill of personal discovery among books."¹ During the years of early adolescence, when the child finds little opportunity to exercise his powers in any objective fashion in an adult-controlled world, a very potent means of emotional satisfaction comes from the possibility of identifying himself and his ambitions with the characters he admires in books. One glance at the emotional patterns of *Evangeline* or the *Man Without a Country* will show why they do not fill the emotional need of the average eighth grade pupil. It is this more fundamental analysis of the values in books which must come before we can hope to bring the right book and the right child together.

In considering the problem of developing taste in reading among elementary school boys and girls, I find it impossible to separate the question of the nature and value of content from adequacy and artistry of presentation. Dr. Fordice in a recent doctoral study at the University of Oklahoma defines a classic as "any work that represents a high point in human

experience, which has personal and social value for the individual, and adequate and beautiful treatment by the author."²

If we grant this dual aspect of the problem of developing a sincere appreciation of better books, we are in a position to consider the means by which we may determine whether our program is working toward the desired end. I have wrestled earnestly with this question without any conclusive answer, but I have set down tentatively five standards by means of which, it seems to me, we may judge results. I am not at all sure that they are the best five, but I give them to you to work with, to try out in your classes, and to alter and revise as your experience dictates.

In the first place, *does our program lead from narrowness of experience to breadth?* For example, does it surely include what I like to call the three F's of elementary school reading — books of fun, books of fact, and books of fancy? Children have a right to books of *sheer fun*, many of them, in the program of reading, books to which they go primarily for a jolly time and a good laugh. They must share in books also the kinds of happy everyday experiences they enjoy in life. You remember Winnie-the-Pooh, who, seeing the pine cones lying all around, "murmured a murmur to himself in a singing sort of way." Children should be led by books to that kind of spontaneous enjoyment of the enriching experiences which life presents to them. The amount of factual reading done by boys and girls is becoming increasingly satisfying because of the correlation of reading with every aspect of the school program. But in the pursuit of mere knowledge, we must not forget that other aspect of the reading program which

¹ Ferris, Helen. *To Enrich Young Life*. The Junior Literary Guild, New York, 1939.

² Fordice, Frederick L. "Factors in the Teaching of Literary Appreciation," p. 11 in *Abstracts of Theses: University of Oklahoma Bulletin*, New Series, No. 681, October 1, 1936. Norman, Oklahoma.

takes them into realms of fancy, adding a rosy glow to the more somber colors of the matter-of-fact elements in human experience. Another way of testing the breadth of experience boys and girls find in books is to consider how varied a group of people they become acquainted with in their reading, how many different places, and how many different centuries they come to know intimately. Do they confine their attention to the animal kingdom, to the domain of the aviator, or to the dark halls of mystery and crime? The number of different kinds of worthwhile experiences they find in books is a significant measure of the value of the reading program. The same standard can be used to test the richness of offering in any individual book. A group of eighth grade pupils, for example, thought of twenty-seven *different* reasons for liking *Tom Sawyer* and only three for liking *Tom Swift*.

A second standard by which we may judge of the success of our program is this: *Does it lead from shallowness or triviality of experience to depth and value?* For example, when the author of a cheap juvenile wishes to characterize the three Rover boys, he calls them "the eldest Rover and the youngest Rover"; then in order to avoid the necessity of a middle-sized Rover, he makes the one between "the fun-loving Rover," who cracks all the jokes. Aside from that we know they are "Rovers by name and by nature." For background, one story has, for example, a setting in "a valley," up the rough sides of which the boys climb in pursuit of swindlers. At the top "a magnificent panorama meets their gaze." That is the end of the description. The author of *Tom Swift*, when he wishes to introduce humor into his narrative, furnishes Tom with a harmless and good-natured companion who prefaces every

remark with "Bless my high silk hat!" "Bless my pink umbrella!" or "Bless my diamond ring!" To the children this seems uproariously funny, and chuckles await his every appearance on the scene. Contrast with this sort of writing the understanding one has of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, of Kate and Jancsi in *The Good Master*, or of Wellington of Waterloo,³ when one has seen these individual boys and girls in the many situations and from the many points of view from which the author presents them. Or contrast the depth of understanding which comes from the richness of background of *Rolling Wheels* or *Ho-Ming, Girl of New China* or of any one of the books previously mentioned, with the barrenness of the word "panorama" as the bearer of experiences to boys and girls. Furthermore, if boys and girls are to identify themselves emotionally with these comrades of fiction in pursuit of ideals, it is important that the ideals be worthy of the breathless devotion they receive. It is equally important, also, that the obstacles in the path be real obstacles and the means of overcoming them be such as are available to boys and girls everywhere. At the same time the growth and the rounding out of human personality which comes from meeting both the ups and the downs in human endeavor must be given equal recognition with the ultimate achievement of the objective, worthy as that in itself may be.

In the third place, we may ask, *Does our program lead children from uncritical acceptance of whatever the author presents them to a demand for sincerity and truth to human experience?* By that I do not mean for one moment that we eliminate the fanciful, for there is more truth to human experience in many a fairy tale than in some stories which purport

³ *The Iron Duke*. By John R. Tunis. Harcourt, Brace, 1938.

to present things as they are. For example, we may contrast the objective treatment of the law of the jungle in Kipling's *Jungle Book* or the validity of Mukeiji's story of Kari, the pet elephant, with the sentimentality of *Sonny Elephant* whose chief interest for children lies in his naughtiness and disobedience, in a story in which he is much more the spoiled child than the sturdy inhabitant of the jungle. Again we may ask, do the children in these stories talk and behave as children commonly talk and behave? Is virtue always rewarded with pecuniary rewards? Is the story true to realizable human experience? Do the situation and the characters interact to produce the events that happen or does the author enter in to pull the strings? Do the characters themselves bespeak by their actions and by their integrity as individual personalities our sympathy or our scorn or does the author find it necessary to enter into the narrative to direct our judgment or to stir our emotions by sentimental comment or ready-made evaluation? By some such standard as this we may judge the quality of reading done by boys and girls. In the realm of informative writing we may stimulate similarly a demand for verifiable facts.

In the fourth place, *does the program in reading lead children to a sense of the organic and artistic unity which differentiates a good book from a poor one?* For example, I have read recently some volumes on our national parks, prepared especially for children, in which one plows through ten pages of mere chatter to find two pages of fact. I do not believe that is the way to please children. When they read for facts, they want the facts—not the remarks of Johnny and Mary about each other and about the natural objects the reader is capable of enjoying through direct and concrete presentation

by the author himself. If the book is a story, we ask whether the action is vigorous and swiftly moving, well-motivated, and uninterrupted in its course. Do the conflicts resolve themselves as the characters and the situation suggest they should? Or, as in the main problem of Dr. Broening's excellent study to which she has already referred, does the ending square with the events leading up to it, with the characters in the story, and with the known facts of human experience.⁴ When I refer to artistic unity, I ask whether the style of the book is appropriate to the theme. So far as the children are concerned, it means that they experience a certain lift of spirit and a quickening of perception from the very manner of telling itself. *The White Stag* is an example of what I mean; so also is *Treasure Island* or the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*, or Mrs. Anne Axtell Morris's *Digging in Yucatan*.

Finally, we raise the most fundamental question of all: *Does our program lead children to a genuine sense of enjoyment in better and better books?* We know that what matters most is that children should find real joy in books, for only as we develop a hunger for more, is the habit of reading assured. It is easy to make children enthusiastic about some books; but we have set up as our definition of appreciation, "personal acceptance of worth." Only as they find joy in reading based upon such standards of worth as we have considered this afternoon, can we judge ourselves fully successful in our efforts. Not all children will achieve these ends. We shall lead them only so far as they can go and retain a fundamental desire to continue reading. But some of them, under guidance, can and will choose the best. To them also we have a significant responsibility.

⁴ Broening, Angela. *Developing Appreciation Through Teaching Literature*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929.

The Place Of Literature In Character Education

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AMONG THE numerous valuable approaches and aids to education for character, literature has very special values of its own. Signs are not lacking at the present time to show that educators are becoming increasingly aware of its particular merits in this field of education.

Books are a vital aid in this task. They furnish an excellent background for developing desirable concepts of conduct. A particular story may often be used with reference to a single character trait in a class in which it may be necessary to develop or repress that trait.

Books may be utilized as additional preparation for meeting and dealing with the situations life will present to each of us. Moreover, they make the individual's outlook on life fuller and richer; and the characters provide moral instruction of an entertaining, exemplary, or admonitory nature.

One of the particular excellences of literature as a contributor to character training is the unlimited field it furnishes for directed thinking. Through the study of literature an appreciation may be developed for the ways in which living can be made a fine art. Literature can be made to hold before the student the vision of the ideal. The reading of good books helps in the inculcation of tolerant, loving attitudes, and influences tending toward truth and sincerity. Students are thereby helped to find their own styles of self-expression, and, perhaps beyond all

else in importance, are aided in developing their powers of critical appreciation.

Civilization is generated and fostered partly through the agency of literature; but literature will not operate as a compelling force in children's lives unless it is made interesting to them. The younger children are probably the best material of all from the point of view of the teacher who uses literature as an aid in character training. With them, the subject is fresher, more real and vivid than at any later time, for it can be approached directly, without the barrier of print and paper.

One error to be guarded against, however, especially in the instance of the younger children, is that of attempting to inculcate moral lessons unsuited to their chronological age, special interests, or mental level. If children show signs of boredom or restlessness while stories are being told or read, the cause should be sought; and it is more likely to be found in the teacher than in the children. It is the teacher's task to provide literary experiences that are carefully attuned to the child's knowledge and understanding. We may almost invariably count upon his imagination being vivid and fertile, far more so than our own, but we should take care not to bring him up against blank walls beyond which his imagination cannot go.

Nor can the provision of the proper kind of literary experiences be achieved unless the teacher has an intimate knowl-

edge of the entire field of literature, of her pupils, of their interests and experiences, and, equally important, of their problems. Personal problems may often be linked with more or less similar problems of characters in fiction, and, under wise guidance, will often point the way to satisfactory and permanent solutions.

Yet care should be exercised to refrain from the commission of artistic offenses. Many works of poetry and prose are best left to themselves as vehicles for a different kind of inspiration from that of moral training. The material in this field may perhaps be classified in two ways: first, that which readily adapts itself to use in pointing out moral lessons or exemplifying modes of conduct; second, and of at least equal import, that which, because of its beauty of form, serves as a general influence toward aesthetic appreciation, and thence toward good in the widest sense of the word.

As an interpreter of life, literature has no peer. It reveals the aspirations and the aims of men and women, and depicts the consequences, both good and bad, of their actions and motives. It sets up guideposts to desirable conduct, stirs the imagination, widens the sympathies, stimulates thought, and provides interesting and profitable vicarious experiences.

Our vast literary resources, however, compel a most careful selection for children's reading, if training in character enters into the reading purpose. The teacher must consider many things. Direction of too rigid a kind may serve no good end. As a rule, children will enjoy books and stories more if they are permitted and encouraged to choose for themselves, at the beginning, within the safe bounds of a class library. The teacher should recognize the importance of vocabulary, interest, ethical content, and style in literature if her choice of

the best ancient and modern lore of all nations is to be wise. Also, if she is to teach children literature that is harmonious in spirit with the other interests they are pursuing, she should also be equipped with a comprehensive knowledge of literature; of childhood and of children, of psychology and educational psychology.

The moral content of literature surpasses that of any other subject, in its concreteness, simplicity, variety of form and theme, and in its universality. The teacher's part in its use in character education may be described as her co-operation with the tale as an interpreter of life.

One important aspect of the problem of the use of literature in the development of character is the danger that lies in making literature the basis for sermonizing. It is wise, however, to bring out the universality of characters and events, in books, and to compare them with the people of the present, and the things that happen to them. Through this indirect method will be revealed the tendency of undesirable traits to failure, and the tendency to success that should be the part of the traits we wish to cultivate. Instinctively students admire the honest characters in books, and despise the villains; it is the role of the teacher to make a tactful application of admired forms of conduct to situations that arise in school.

The aims of character education, as they may be fulfilled through the use of good literature, might be enumerated as follows: To inspire the imagination and enrich the emotional life of the student; to help pupils see their own experiences in the literature they read, and so learn to understand human nature and in time to gain a clearer perception of themselves and their motives; to develop high ideals of life and conduct by arousing admira-

tion for the great personalities and noble characters of literature; and to inspire in students devotion to the political, social, and ethical principles upon which our country is founded.

If the teacher will help the pupil to see the points made in the tales of world literature from the standpoint of his own life rather than abstractedly, the lessons that literature has to teach will become more completely an integral part of the child's life. Students should enjoy their reading, appreciate the author's style, enrich their own lives, and form their characters by the presentation of life in the book concerned. Reading good books can give many things to a child: a fund of knowledge; an appreciation of the lives and works of others; a mind full of pictures of various times and places and people; an unlimited field for directed thinking; some idea of the fine art of living; judgment in making right choices in the situations of life; appreciation of the beautiful in the many phases in which the aesthetic touches our lives; a vision of the ideal; wisdom in the use of leisure time; attitudes of sympathy, tolerance, sincerity, honesty, insight into the aims and aspirations of men and women; and the consequences of these.

It would seem that every subject in the curriculum,—geography, history, ma-

thematics, and the like,—contains elements that might well be utilized in character training, but the subject that seems to offer the most value in this respect is literature.

If literature is taught by an intelligent teacher, one who is widely versed in the fields of literature and child psychology, with the conscious aim in her mind to employ the people, happenings, and ideas found in literature in the development of character, she cannot but succeed in her task of training the young.

Literature, intelligently interpreted by an enthusiastic teacher, is without a superior as an instrument of moral training.

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Bases For A Reading Program

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THE MAJOR TASK of the schools, in the past, was teaching children the three R's—the tools. In general, it was assumed by teachers and laymen alike that the job was being at least fairly well done, especially in reading. The first widely recognized intimation to the contrary was some twenty years ago when it was discovered that 24.8 per cent. of the million drafted young men, who were between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, and recent products of the public schools of the nation, could not read well enough to read a newspaper. Partially as a result of that discovery, research in reading was given a great impetus. The results have gradually filtered into the public schools. There is no question but that a much larger proportion of our young people are reading at a much higher level than was true two decades ago. But we are still not satisfied. Books on remedial reading and countless articles in our educational journals give ample proof that a great many of our 'teen age pupils in our junior and senior high schools and even in our colleges are not able to use reading as a tool with any degree of efficiency. They do not have adequate command of the gamut of reading skills demanded by their school work, nor do they always have the proper attitudes and point of view in regard to reading.

Schools at all levels are attacking the problems of remedial and corrective reading intelligently and energetically. There is an increasing amount of helpful material to be placed in the hands of the pupils, and teachers everywhere are learning to use proper materials and techniques. However a more basic and

fundamental problem is that of setting up a reading program in our public schools which will make unnecessary most of our remedial reading. Such a sound, carefully worked out program might be likened to the work of the medical profession in preventive medicine.

Basic Principles

A reading program to prevent and avoid reading difficulties and troubles on the part of our pupils must have a sound basis. The following three principles are considered fundamental:

1. Children must be considered as human beings, each differing from the rest. In other words, individual differences in interests, attitudes, intelligence, and maturity (physical, emotional, social and intellectual), are recognized and adjusted to by the school.
2. The child, his development and growth, not the curriculum, teacher, or machinery of the schools, is considered of paramount importance.
3. Acceptance of the two above principles (namely recognizing individual differences and considering pupil growth paramount) leads naturally to the last principle—that of taking each pupil where he is, and helping him to grow, and to develop those skills, attitudes, understandings, and appreciations which will be useful and will enrich his life. Gertrude Hildreth expresses this idea very well: "Modern teachers disregard any preconceived notion of what grade four (for example) means, and instead teach in terms of who the children are." And may one add, "where and what they are"?

A reading program based upon the above principles may be thought of as having four major aspects; namely physical, physiological, psychological, and educational.

Physical Aspects

In connection with the physical part of the reading program we think of the physical comfort of the children and the physical aspects of the room. Lighting, including the amount, diffusion, lack of glare and avoidance of shadows is one of the major considerations. A light meter can usually be borrowed from the local utilities company and such an experience can be said to be quite enlightening. The actual comfort of the pupils is also important. Temperature, ventilation, and humidity need checking. The adjustment, or lack of adjustment of the seats to the pupils is worth looking into. The general attractiveness of the room is significant. Closely related to this last point is the attractiveness and suitability of the materials with which the pupils are expected to work. They should be appealing to the eye, interesting in content and style, and suited to the particular needs and interests of the particular groups. In a sound reading program every effort will be made to "set the stage" in such a way that all these physical factors will be conducive to reading.

Physiological Aspects

As more is being learned about the physiological development and maturation of children we find additional help on our reading problems. General physiological development, as evidenced by height, weight, co-ordination and general bodily growth and maturity frequently throw light on a particular case. A child noticeably immature and under-developed will probably not make great strides in learning to read.

Recently some significant discoveries

have been made in regard to the maturation of the eye. Luella Cole has summarized them most interestingly. She shows how, just as man, through the centuries, used his eyes primarily for distance and comparatively large objects, so the child uses his eyes before entering school. Another important factor is that a child's eyes mature and change, just as do other parts of his body. The eyes of all children do not mature at the same rate. Cole states that approximately 60 per cent of the entering first graders are far sighted. This is normal for three-fourths of them, and they will outgrow it as they mature and develop. Farsightedness is the normal condition for early childhood, just as nearsightedness is normal for later life. From research data available it rather seems that the eyeballs do not usually reach adult shape till the child is eight or nine years of age. Such a situation must be met and adjusted to by the school—the burden of adjustment must not be thrown upon the child.

In addition to the large group that is farsighted and whose eyes will in time develop, we have others who need expert attention for such difficulties as farsightedness, nearsightedness, astigmatism, muscular disbalance and eye disease.

Another physiological aspect requiring attention is hearing, particularly the matter of auditory discrimination which is a significant element in reading success. The child's general physical health is also of paramount importance. No longer can the school neglect the physical side of a child—it is basic and must receive first consideration.

Psychological Aspects

The major psychological factors may be grouped under the general head of maturity. The maturation of the eye has already been discussed briefly. Equally important is the child's intellectual ma-

turity. While there are some cases on record of children with mental ages of six or even less learning to read, there is fairly general agreement among writers and teachers that a mental age of six years, four months, or six years, six months is very desirable. Just as children mature at different rates physically, so they mature at different rates mentally, and good cannot come from forcing a youngster before he is intellectually ready.

Emotional and social maturity also form part of the picture. In a good reading program primary children are not forced into reading before they are mature enough, or ready to profit from the experiences. Health, and various physical aspects are looked after carefully, and the children are guided through experiences which will aid them in maturing intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Educational Aspects

The major educational aspects of an effective reading program may be considered under five heads, namely, provision for readiness, suitable materials, good teaching methods, testing, and corrective and remedial help.

Provision for reading readiness means more than merely postponement of reading till children are physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually ready. It means making definite provision for helping pupils get ready for reading in the primary grades and for any and every new type or use of reading at any and every stage of the pupil's school life. The upper grade, high school and college teachers must recognize and meet the problem, as well as the primary teachers. Each teacher must take his pupils where he finds them, helping them to grow and develop. This means adjusting reading materials in content subjects to the read-

ing levels of the pupils. It means teaching a child how to read and handle a new type of material, say science or mathematics, before turning him loose on it. It means teaching him all the major reading skills and the various rates and combinations of rates before expecting him to use them. Monroe and Backus bring out clearly the serious maladjustments that arise when we fail to bring about this readiness.

Secondly we are interested in materials. As has been said, they must be attractive, worthwhile, and interesting. The materials which children are expected to read and use should be suited to their reading ability, and to their mental and emotional maturity. There should be plenty of such materials.

The third educational factor has to do with methods of teaching. Good teaching methods have the following characteristics: (1) Individual help and corrective teaching is needed. (2) Provision for building up as large a sight and meaning vocabulary as possible. (3) Provision for growth in the development of reading skills, abilities and attitudes by small levels or steps, rather than grades, (as illustrated by Stone). Again the pupils must be taken where they are and helped to grow. (4) Instruction, help and experiences are provided in the major types of reading activities, namely functional related reading, individual recreational reading, work type and practise reading, and audience reading.

The fourth educational factor is provision for testing. Such testing will probably utilize both standardized and informal tests, though a good reading teacher can, if necessary, dispense with standardized tests. Just as the medical profession advises annual or semi-annual medical and dental check-ups, so in school we find an ounce of prevention

worth a pound of cure. Such testing should be followed by carefully planned corrective work.

Lastly, remedial help should be available. However, if the above program has been carried out it is very likely that the number of students actually needing remedial help will be much smaller than it is today.

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STIMULATING INTERESTS AND APPRECIATION THROUGH READING

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In conclusion, we cannot do better, it seems to me, than remember the words of Professor George Woodberry, that great exponent of appreciation of the best in books:

"Growth in appreciation is neither rapid nor final; it moves with no swifter step than life itself; and it opens, like life, always on larger horizons."⁵ We

⁵ Woodberry, George E. *The Appreciation of Literature*. p. 5. New York: Harcourt, Brace. 1921.

cannot outrun the experience of the child. We can only keep a genuine relationship between his experience and the greater wealth of experience that awaits him in books, hoping always that if the bond is kept a living bond, progress in the appreciation of the true and the beautiful in books will be secure; for it will be built on the sure foundation of *personal acceptance of worth*.

Why Is Grammar Being Shut Out?

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WHY IS GRAMMAR shut out of the lower grades entirely in some schools? By lower grades I mean all grades below the seventh.

First: It is considered too difficult for young children to understand. To be sure, they had grammar in the lower grades years ago. But not all children grasped it in those days, you say. True enough. There were many failures in grammar. So also were there in other subjects. But the fact that some cannot grasp a subject is not sufficient reason for denying it to those who are capable of understanding it perfectly. Our curriculum makers have catered too much of late years to the ones who can't rather than to the ones who can. Besides, I am not so sure that the majority of children could not learn grammar if it were made sufficiently simple and presented in an interesting enough manner.

Second: It is considered unnecessary. That is quite true for a large number of the children who pass through the grades. They need to be drilled and drilled in speaking and writing the simplest sentences correctly. They may never go beyond those first drills. But how about the children who enter school at six years of age with an almost perfect command of English? They have been drilled in correct usage from their days in the cradle. Surely they are ready for grammar before the seventh grade. And they should have studied it in detail before they enter high school. I am thinking of those children with a cultural back-

ground. I am thinking of those who intend to enter college and the professional schools. The tool subjects are being put off entirely too long for them. Grammar is a tool subject like the multiplication tables, and it should be presented early in school life.

Why is less and less grammar given in the seventh and eighth grades? One modern course of study permits, for the superior children in those two grades, the study of complete subject and complete predicate, simple subject and simple predicate, adjective and adverbial modifiers, and five of the eight parts of speech,—the noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, and adverb. Now that much could easily be learned in the fourth and fifth, or at least, the fifth and sixth grades. But in the present course the child is not even to be exposed to grammar before the seventh grade.

Why are teachers turned out of teachers' colleges with so inadequate a knowledge of grammar? It seems to me it is because they did not have it presented properly in the lower grades. Grammar, being a tool subject, should be learned early and practiced throughout the school years, just as the addition combinations and the multiplication tables are in arithmetic. The high school teacher of English should not be required to teach the elements of grammar any more than the algebra and geometry teacher should have to teach addition combinations and the multiplication tables. One becomes proficient in the use of the tool subjects through years of practice. There-

fore, they should be given to the child as early as possible in his school life, so he can have the use of them all along the way.

I know a young teacher, recently out of teachers' college, with excellent qualifications for the most part, but with insufficient equipment in grammar. Early in her teaching career, however, she was particularly fortunate in having a kindly principal, who was eager for her success and was willing to coach her night after night in grammar, thus preparing her for her eighth grade class the following day. A good foundation in grammar in the lower grades would have saved that estimable young teacher the embarrassment of having to go to her principal for instruction in an elementary subject.

Now, why is grammar considered so difficult? One reason is that it is so often scattered here and there throughout a language book, which is filled with other matter, such as spelling lessons, composition lessons, games, correct usage drills, poems to be enjoyed or memorized, letters to be written, and many other topics. The child is confused by the multiplicity of subjects, and no wonder.

About ten years ago, when grammar was still allowed an honorable place in the elementary curriculum, even though it was presented, as stated above, in a jumble of other things in a language book, I was having difficulty in getting my seventh grade to master it. The pupils seemed lost. At last, I tried what I am now recommending: I segregated the grammar from the other material in the book. In fact, I made a little grammar book of my own, collecting in a few typewritten pages the grammar facts given in the language book, which was the state text at that time. The boys and girls could see that there was not a great deal to learn after all. Then, instead of

using the sentences given in the text for analysis and parsing, many of which were of the literary type, we started with simple two-word sentences. To these we added qualifying words, phrases, and clauses. Later we added complementary and independent elements. The children understood it readily enough then. And what is significant, they were interested and liked it. I have not been able to understand why diagramming has been so often condemned recently, and that, too, at a time when visual education is being advocated most strongly. We used the Reed and Kellog system of diagramming for our sentences. Our diagrams grew as our sentences grew. Picturing relationships of words in a sentence makes those relationships all the more clear. Children and parents were enthusiastic.

Later in the year, I was given a group of ninth graders that were failing because of grammar. I used my little grammar book with those students. It was their salvation. In a few weeks, one of the boys said, "Miss Mortimer, this is the first time I ever knew what it was all about." Needless to say, those students were graduated.

I am fully convinced that, if grammar is taught as a separate subject and made sufficiently simple and interesting, children will not only understand it but will enjoy it.

Another reason why grammar is so difficult for children is that the sentences used for analysis and parsing in the ordinary text are too difficult, and are absolutely a thing apart from their own life and interests. The child should be given only such sentences as he is prepared for, sentences connected with his daily activities, such as, "Boys fly kites on windy days."

In the little book I used, no sentence was given that was beyond the child's

ability to construe every word in it. There were no literary sentences, no poems, no sentences with parts in reversed order. All these may be taken up after the child has mastered the easy, straightforward sentences. When the child knows the straightforward sentences thoroughly, then, and not till then, is the time to begin giving him sentences with words, phrases, or clauses out of their natural order. But this should not be attempted until the child is master of the natural order.

The only composition required in this little grammar for little people was the writing of sentences like models.

Now, why would I put grammar in the lower grades,—fourth, fifth, and sixth?

Because it is necessary in teaching punctuation. You cannot teach the use of the comma if the learner does not know the construction of the parts of the sentence he is to punctuate. "A restrictive relative clause should not be set off by commas." The learner, however, must know a lot of grammar before he can recognize clauses at all, and still more must he know before he can distinguish the restrictive from the non-restrictive relative clause. The next rule: "A non-restrictive relative clause should be set off by commas." These two rules, I am aware, are among the hardest punctuation rules to apply, but they are not too difficult for normal eighth graders if they have had sufficient practice with the simpler work recommended for the lower grades.

Because, in the second place, a knowledge of grammar helps in understanding the dictionary. A boy or girl should not be required to wait till he is in the high school before he knows the meaning of *n. pl.*, *v. t.*, and *v. i.* when he finds them in the dictionary. I mean not alone what those particular abbreviations stand for,

but what a transitive verb, for instance, really is and how it is used.

Then too, grammar—I mean the understanding of grammar—is a great help in comprehending what one reads. Knowing the structure of a sentence helps the child to grasp the subject and hold it in mind while rambling on through phrases and clauses and parentheses until he finally comes to the predicate two or three lines below. In oral reading it also helps the reader to modulate the voice so it will convey to the audience the correct meaning.

The study of grammar also gives the child the "sentence sense." If he is familiar with grammatical construction, he knows when his own sentences are finished. Therefore he can avoid the never-ending "and" sentence.

And lastly, knowledge of grammar gives the child a criterion by which to judge the correctness of his own language, both written and oral, as well as the language of his associates. Possibly this is the most vital reason for its study early in the course. One sees so much in his reading that is wrong both in its ungrammatical form and in its erroneous punctuation, and one hears so much that is incorrect in the speech of his fellows that he needs a measuring rod, a rule, a something by which he can judge his own efforts. Grammar gives him that measuring rod.

In closing, let me say that very little children can learn the simpler parts of grammar. Building sentences like a model is interesting work for little people, and they like it. The diagramming of simple sentences is meaningful seat work for children as low as the fourth grade. In an age when visual aids are sought for in all subjects except grammar, why is picturing the relation of words in a sentence taboo? Why is dia-

gramming consigned to the garbage heap?

If grammar is begun in the fourth or fifth grade, the more difficult aspects of the subject can be given detailed study in the seventh and eight grades by the average and superior students.

If grammar is mastered in the grades, much valuable time is saved for the high school student in which to do more advanced work in composition and literature.

The following illustrates work with sentences. These sentences were studied through diagramming.

BUILDING SENTENCES

Necessary Parts

1. Trees grew.
2. Frogs croak.
3. Girls sew.
4. Lambs frisk.
5. Men work.
6. Boys ran.
7. Leaves are falling.
8. Rules are obeyed.
9. Go.
10. Study.

With Word Modifiers

1. The hardwood trees grew slowly.
2. The green frogs croak continually.
3. The large girls sew neatly.
4. The snow-white lambs frisk blithely.
5. The strong men work rapidly.
6. The agile boys ran swiftly.
7. The bright leaves are falling silently.
8. The few rules are obeyed promptly.
9. Go immediately.
10. Study quietly.

With Phrase Modifiers Added

1. The hardwood trees of the forest grew slowly during many years.
2. The green frogs in the pool croak continually in the evening.
3. The large girls of Garfield sew neatly on their dresses.
4. The snow-white lambs of the flock frisk blithely in the meadow.
5. The strong men of the mountains work rapidly in the deep mines.
6. The agile boys of the ninth grade ran swiftly in the race.
7. The bright leaves of the maple are falling silently to the ground.
8. The few rules of this school are obeyed promptly by the pupils.
9. Go immediately into the house.
10. Study quietly during study period.

With Clause Modifiers Added

1. The hardwood trees of the forest which were burned recently grew slowly during many years while generations of men passed away.
2. The green frogs in the pool which is under my window croak continually in the evening while I am studying.
3. The large girls of Garfield who are in the sewing class sew neatly on their dresses when the teacher directs.
4. The snow-white lambs of the flock that can run about frisk blithely in the meadow while their mothers are grazing.
5. The strong men of the mountains who are employed work rapidly in the deep mines when the supervisor is watching.
6. The agile boys of the ninth grade who were chosen ran swiftly while the people cheered.
7. The bright leaves of the maple which were colored by the frost are falling silently to the ground while I walk through the park.
8. The few rules of this school which have been explained clearly are obeyed promptly by the pupils because the pupils are well trained.
9. Go immediately into the house after the bell rings.
10. Study quietly during study period while others are studying.

Eric P. Kelly, Interpreter of Poland

MATE GRAYE HUNT

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ERIC P. KELLY knows and appreciates the historic and legendary background of Poland. He, a native-born American, did welfare work in France during the World War. There he met Polish exiles and went to Poland with them to do reconstruction work after the war. In 1925-26 he was in the University of Krakow, as the first American professor to study there under the Kosciuszko Foundation. The Polish government gave him four of its highest awards: the Pilsudski Medal, the Silver Award of the Polish Red Cross, the Gold Cross of Merit, and the Decoration "Polonia Restituta", in recognition of his realistic and interesting stories.

So deep is Mr. Kelly's admiration for the "sensitive spirits and fierce patriotism" of this old and heroic country that, although he was carrying on his work as instructor in Dartmouth College during the tragic events in Europe last fall, he remarked, "We felt as if the shells were falling on us."

For the past decade, Mr. Kelly has been the literary interpreter of Poland

for the young readers in America. Beginning with *The Trumpeter of Krakow*, which was awarded the Newbery Medal in 1929, he has continued to write books with a long-ago European background. His list of such books can never grow too extensive in length or range, so long as he adheres to his chosen creed:

I have tried to set my people in true backgrounds... There is a class, and a large class too, engaged in writing children's books and stories with true backgrounds zealously worked out and real or lifelike characters, whose end is not cheapness or marketability. I hold it the proudest thing in my life that I aim to be in such company; to write books that will play a part in the lives of children and give them something of pleasure and something of value.

How well he has succeeded! Teachers and librarians testify to the "pleasure and value" the children

are receiving from such books as Mr. Kelly's trilogy, that brings to life Poland of olden times.¹ Although these three books are about ancient Poland, they are in no sense a series.

The Trumpeter of Krakow, a tale of the fifteenth century is concerned with a "sacred duty with a romantic legendary

¹ See end of article for complete list of Mr. Kelly's books.



background"—the sounding of the Heynal four times each hour from the tower of the historic church in Krakow. The power and mystery that attends a precious crystal adds color and the spirit of adventure to the story. The volume is illustrated by Angela Pruszyńska, a Polish artist, who made the pictures at the scene of the story.

The second book in this trilogy is *The Blacksmith of Vilno*, a tale of Poland in the year 1832, which, as the title indicates, is centered in a blacksmith shop near the edge of the mysterious old city of Vilno. It is based on the efforts and activities of the patriots of Poland in, and immediately following, their unsuccessful revolution against Nicholas, the Tsar of Russia. This book, also, is illustrated by Angela Pruszyńska.

The last of the three books thus grouped is *The Golden Star of Halich* which arouses the reader's curiosity as to the identity of the "golden star." The answer is discovered by following the hero, Michael, who escapes the snares set by astronomer and dwarf. The "golden star" was responsible for the gathering of the nations for the purpose of shaking the power of Kasimir the Great. This "tale of the Red Land in 1362" is illustrated by the same artist who did the other two.

Still another piece of interpretation of Poland is the slight volume, *The Christmas Nightingale*, which contains three beautiful Christmas legends of Poland. There is the story of the little boy who could not speak but could only sing like a nightingale; the story of the three brave children who gave a puppet show; and the story of the small blind Anetka who asked for a lamp for Christmas. Marguerite de Angeli is the illustrator.

Following the production and gratifying reception of his Polish trilogy, Mr.

Kelly transferred his attention to his home land and wrote, first, *Three Sides of Agiochook*, a tale of the New England frontier in 1775, including something of Dartmouth College.² In his second book with American background, *Treasure Mountain*, the scene shifted to the Southwest (New Mexico and Colorado) with its Indian lore and history. This is a "tale in which is interwoven all the color and romance of the Southwest toward the end of the century." Illustrations are by Raymond Lufkin.

Again Mr. Kelly went to Europe of the Middle Ages for his theme, this time to Antwerp. In *At the Sign of the Golden Compass*, he tells the story of the early days of the printing trade, with Christopher Plantin as the central authentic figure. Of this great pioneering printer, Mr. Kelly says:

He is a type particularly attractive to Americans because of his breadth, his culture, his practicality, and his sincerity in political and religious beliefs. . . . He was not only abreast of the times in which he lived, but he was among those choice spirits of humanity who believe in the progress of the human race, and work with all zealously toward its betterment.

Having "tasted printer's ink" at an early age, and having continued with it as a rather steady diet, Mr. Kelly seemed destined to pay his debt of love by writing of the tragedies and triumphs of the early printers during the days of religious and political conflicts. When asked how he came to write this story, he gave an answer that showed the enthusiasm and thoroughness with which he has laid the background of each of his books:

I have always been interested in printing, and have always wanted to write a story with a printing house background. In 1920, a troopship bringing me back to America from Poland, happened to put in at Antwerp. There with nothing to do for

² Dartmouth College is Mr. Kelly's alma mater, and for several years past he has been a member of its teaching staff.

many days I visited the Plantin Museum and was immediately taken with it, entranced, if I may say so, and began to read and study all I could about Plantin.

During the eighteen intervening years, the latent story gathered strength until its release (1938) under the title of *At the Sign of the Golden Compass*, which is a rapidly and directly moving story with dramatic intensity. Mr. Kelly mentions the great names in the conflicts of that time — Champagny, the Prince of Orange, Oberstain—with the surety of personal acquaintance, due to his long, sympathetic study of his subject.

Young people, particularly boys of the upper grades, are fascinated by the vivid accounts of the forged handbill, Godfrey's escape from England under false accusation, the haven he found in the Plantin shops and home, the working of the prevalent "Black Magic," the havoc wrought by the Spanish Fury, Godfrey's vindication, and his and Lucile's romance.

Another volume on this author's list for young readers is *The Girl who Would be Queen*. This is the story of the proud, ambitious, eighteenth century Countess Francoise Krasinska, revealed in her diary, which Madame Clara Hoffmanowa published in the nineties, as an historical novel. Now under the editorship and the sure touch of Mr. Kelly's journalistic hand this diary becomes alive with its vignettes of political intrigues, brilliant pageantry of court life, happiness and sorrow of the royal pawns, mysteries, marriage costumes, home etiquette—all woven together with the pathetic love story of the Countess and the Duke. The whole story moves rapidly in spite of the fact that it covers a long span of years and deals with the cumbersome machinery of nations. There is an economy of words, well chosen, which gives the story a snap and scintillation that young people especially will enjoy.

In reading this latest contribution to the interpretation of Poland, one cannot but wonder whether it was the eighteenth century "iniquitous business," politely called the Partition of Poland, or the trend of events during the recent months that evoked the author's strong tone of prophecy with which the book closes. As the Countess prayed in the Church of Our Lady, she asked her heart: What will Poland's fate be?

She could think of nothing save disaster—that it had run its course as a nation and now the end had come. But just then the trumpeter played the Heynal for the fourth and last time, this time toward the west,—and somehow in the quivering notes there was that which seemed to imply the immortality of her nation's spirit. It had sounded in that tower through all the years of Poland's rise to power, in the days of prosperity and in times of adversity. So it would ever sound, the message of the immortality of the nation.

This book with its intrigues and pageantry of the eighteenth century is another evidence that Eric P. Kelly, literary ambassador, bears a "portfolio" bulging with history, traditions, legends, and romances. These features he presents attractively and successfully to his vigorous, eager, young audience in America.

His latest book, *On the Staked Plain*, published only last month, is a story of the Texas Panhandle, chiefly of the present time yet well-flavored with the past. Treasure hunters, Comanche Indians, and outlaws mingle in its mystery, which a girl and her boy allies set themselves to solve. It is a well-told story that is good reading for girls and boys alike, not only in the Southwest, but everywhere.

BOOKS BY ERIC P. KELLY

The Trumpeter of Krakow. 1928. Illustrated by Angela Pruszyńska. Macmillan.

The Blacksmith of Vilno. 1930. Illustrated by Angela Pruszyńska. Macmillan.

The Golden Star of Halich. 1931. Illustrated by Angela Pruszyńska. Macmillan.

Ethics in Fairy and Household Tales

PAULINE BYRD TAYLOR

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IF A SOLOMON were to recommend a place to go to learn ethics as he did to learn industry he certainly would not suggest the fairy tale. These stories are not didactic in intent; any ethics which they may seem to have are neither sustained nor consistent. In some instances they are completely unethical; in others they seem to adhere to civilized moral codes but with the purpose of making the story move along, rather than to teach a lesson. The reader, if he must have a moral in his stories, will have to read it into them himself. He will not find a consistent, sustained, moral concept. In short, it seems safe to say that as far as fairy tales are concerned, "There ain't no ten commandments."

In the first place I would say that these stories are amoral in nature. They do not seem to recognize nor include moral precepts. The actions of the characters whom we meet are not governed by a moral law. There is never a time when we are conscious of an inner voice which we might call conscience saying "thou shalt," or "thou shalt not." It appears that this omission of regard for a system of ethics is due to ignorance of law rather than to a deliberate breaking or transgressing of it. Very few references are made to prayer or Deity or any of the things we associate with religion. The individual seems to be responsible to no one but himself or perhaps the King.

It is interesting to notice that a double standard of ethics exists in these stories. While the villain must be circumspect

in behavior and is punished if he isn't, the hero may do just about as he wishes—and he doesn't always wish to do the right thing. For example the main character may lie to his heart's content if it suits his purpose to do so and no one thinks the worse of him. Notice how the hero in "The Giant Who Had No Heart In His Body" broke his word when he promised to spare the giant's life if he would divulge the secret hiding place of his heart. Consider, too, the story of "Puss in Boots" in which Puss does not hesitate to lie, to steal, and to kill in order to advance her master. And there is the case of the hero in "Jack and the Beanstalk" who robbed and murdered and deceived in order to make his fortune. We are led to feel in all these stories that this kind of conduct is not only permissible but commendable. In other words, where the hero's actions are concerned the end seems to justify the means.

Not so with the villain. Such conduct on his part would meet with certain and severe punishment. Note how cruelly the servant woman was punished in "The Goose Girl" because she took her mistress' place and deceived the King. In her case we are made to feel that such conduct is most reprehensible. The jealousy and cruelty of the Queen in "Snow White and the Dwarfs" is fittingly punished. And in the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," although it is right for Ali Baba to steal from the robbers and for his servant to kill them, it is wrong for the bandits to steal and to kill. In short, because the villain is opposed to

the hero he must be thwarted and by any means which the hero finds at his disposal.

On the face of it, it might seem that these stories end as they do in order to teach us that the good are rewarded while the bad are punished. But in only one of them, the Grimm version of Cinderella known as "Aschenputtel," is anything said about the behavior of the characters. In that story the dying mother admonished her daughter to be devout and good.

No moral is drawn in any of these stories. We can read one into certain ones if we choose, but it is more likely that the good things which happen to the hero and the bad which come to the villain are only incidental to carrying along the action. In addition, as has been indicated, stories into which morals can be read are few.

It does seem in some instances that there is an attempt to adhere to civilized principles. These cases are the exception, however, rather than the rule. Here are a few examples: In the story of "Toads and Diamonds" the youngest daughter, who happens to be gentle and obedient, is rewarded by a gift of jewels and flowers falling from her lips at each word, while her naughty sister is given a very loathsome punishment. In the Cinderella stories the heroine, who is gentle and mild, is helped by a kind fairy and finally is chosen to be the bride of the handsome prince. In the story of "The Elves and the Shoemaker" we find an honest, industrious man who is so poor that his family faces ruin. Good natured elves help him until he becomes prosperous and well established in business. Then only do they leave never to return.

There is one sure way for a character to be punished in the fairy tale. He must injure the hero or his friends in some way. To return to "Toads and Diamonds," we find that the proud, haughty, elder sister

who had been unkind to the younger girl, saucy to her mother, and rude to a disguised fairy, is punished in a most terrible way. In the Cinderella stories the elder sisters received very harsh punishment for their treatment of the heroine. The same is true of Boots' brothers who were not only imprisoned but mutilated as a rebuke for their misbehavior. In the "Three Pigs" the wicked wolf is made into soup, the troll in the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" is disposed of promptly, and from the killing of others, Bluebeard reaps the reward of being killed. In short we find in these stories that the villain or any one who interferes with the hero is subject to punishment for his wrong-doing.

There are several reasons, I think, for the twisted ethical conceptions which we find in these stories. I shall mention four. In the first place, a simple childish, primitive people produced these tales. Their thinking was mainly subjective and their standards of right and wrong conduct were not well developed.

Second, these stories represent mass thinking which is always on a lower plane than the thinking of individuals. Had some few outstanding thinkers produced these tales, it is likely that the ethical attitude would have been very different.

Third, there is no thought of originality in these stories. Both the plot and the characters are typical, pattern, mechanical. There is a decided lack of individuality. If a character is good he is all good, and if he is bad, he is bad only. Hence there is a constant opposing of the forces of good and evil as represented by the characters. Since the hero is good he must win his goal, and the villain being bad must lose. The means therefore of overcoming obstacles are unlimited as far as the hero is concerned.

One Teacher's Experience In Arousing Interest in Poetry

MARJORIE HILL

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Newton, Iowa

AS A TEACHER in the library of the platoon schools of Newton, Iowa, my experience in developing appreciation of poetry has been an interesting one. The library room is provided with reading tables and chairs. Around thirteen hundred books line the shelves which are low and easily accessible to the children. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades come in each day for a forty-minute reading period. Reference work for home-room subjects, free reading of fiction, history, biography and science occupy the time of the children during their reading period. The reading is voluntary, not forced. Each child chooses his own book.

How to interest these children in poetry, was the question. How make poetry so attractive that it, too, would become a free choice?

First, since enjoyment of poetry reaches its fullest when it is heard and shared with others, and since children delight in programs that are not too much work, we would have a Poetry Day. Each child could choose his favorite poem to read aloud to the class. No one was forced to participate. Only those who desired to do so should take part. It was not necessary to memorize—that bugaboo of children's programs.

Two chairmen were chosen, one for the boys and one for the girls. Their task was to sign up children for the program. Their lists contained the name of the child, the name of the poem, the book,

and the page. This helped prevent a wild scramble to find poems at the last minute, or a "I don't remember what my poem was," or, "I can't find my poem."

Certain standards for oral reading were set up:

1. To read clearly and smoothly.
2. To read so all can hear.
3. To look up from the book.
4. To make it sound like a poem.
5. To know all the words.

A definition of a good audience was also given, so that the children who were listening might realize that the part they played was important. The criticism and suggestions for improvement came almost wholly from the children. An attempt was made, however, to soft-pedal criticism in favor of praise for improvement, and in many cases the improvement began to show.

Little effort was made by the teacher to influence children in their choices except to insist that the selection should not be too long and should come within the comprehension range of the majority of the class. "How many like the poem?" was a favorite question after the child had finished reading. Often at the end of the period we voted, to see which poem was enjoyed the most. And how some child would beam to discover that he had pleased the class!

During the program the chairman took complete charge and the teacher relegated herself to a back seat. She participated only as an appreciative member

of the audience, and if it became necessary to leave the room for a few minutes, she did so, confident that the program would go on without her. New chairmen were appointed for each program and there was an eager rivalry for the position. It was decided to hold the programs bi-weekly, which seemed to be successful in keeping up interest, and yet gave the child plenty of time to choose a poem and study it.

The enthusiasm for poetry which developed during this series of programs was surprising even to the teacher. Many poetry books were thumbed through before the child decided upon a certain selection, and in this way an acquaintance with many different kinds of poems was gained. The poetry shelf contained the Christopher Robin poems of Milne, the nonsense verses of Edward Lear, the fairy fantasies of Rose Fyleman, and the whimsical poems of Dorothy Aldis, as well as many fine anthologies. The favorite collections included "This Singing World," "Silver Pennies," "Home Book of Verse for Young Folks," "Poems Teachers Ask For," and "One Hundred Best Poems for

Boys and Girls." Funny poems, and those with a quirk of humor seemed to be most in demand, though all types of poems were read and enjoyed.

After a period of time it was easy to see the improvement made by the children in facing audience situations, developing speaking voices, and enjoying poetry. Many ask if they may read an entire book of poems and have it put upon the record we keep of each child's reading. Not only do the children like to read poetry; they like to write it as well. A booklet made of poems written by the children during one semester was eagerly seized upon and encouraged more writing. The poems are made up and handed in during library period in a free spontaneous fashion which allows the children to express their feelings in a satisfactory way.

A good deal of emotional steam can be let off by the reading and writing of poetry. As an aid to emotional maturity I can recommend this method of—not teaching poetry—but allowing children to discover poetry for themselves.

ERIC P. KELLY, INTERPRETER OF POLAND

(Continued from page 189)

The Christmas Nightingale. 1932. Illustrated by Marguerite deAngeli. Macmillan.

Three Sides of Agiochbook. 1935. Decorations by LeRoy Appleton. Macmillan.

At the Sign of the Golden Compass. 1938. Illustrated by Raymond Lufkin. Macmillan.

The Girl who would be Queen. 1939. Decorations by Vera Brock. A. C. McClurg & Company.

On the Staked Plain. 1940. Illustrated by Harve Stein. Macmillan.

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Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1940*

R. A. FOSTER

Professor, Department of English

MARGARET HAMPEL

Associate Professor of Education

Ohio University, Athens

(Continued from March)

Edman, Marion Louise, "An Analysis of the Language Arts Program in English in the Public Schools of Riverview, Minnesota, in its Relation to the Needs of the Community." University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Doctoral Dissertation, Mimeographed, 1938.

This study attempted to evaluate the program in English for Grades 3, 6, 9, and 12, in Riverview, Minnesota, a city with a population of slightly more than twenty thousand inhabitants, by applying the following criteria to the objectives, content, methods and outcomes of the language arts program: (1) the degree to which it measured up to the standards set through the known results of research, (2) the degree to which it was in accord with the most forward-looking philosophy and practice in the teaching of English as set down in such documents as the *Experience Curriculum* and *A Modern Program in English*, (3) the degree to which pupils achieved on standardized tests, (4) the degree to which the program met local needs and situations.

The study followed two main lines of approach and included detailed analysis of the offering of the language arts program in Riverview and secondly, a survey of school, home, and community environment in which the children live.

The first type of analysis included a complete testing program which em-

braced all the various types of knowledge and skills in English which can be measured objectively; an analysis of printed curricula; questionnaires, diaries, and check lists to teachers; diaries of the children's expressional activities, both written and oral; and diaries of children's reading. Out-of-school-activities of children were studied by their recording moving picture attendance and radio listening and by their checking an interest and activities inventory.

The study of the community involved gathering and interpreting data pertaining to the population of the city, its socioeconomic status, occupations, industries, and educational opportunities. Detailed data were obtained from a sampling of 403 adults in the city who supplied information relative to their general cultural and occupational levels, their reading habits, their general recreational pursuits, the writing and speaking activities in which they engaged in their personal and vocational life. The community was further studied by means of an analysis and evaluation of the book supply in school and public libraries and of the reading materials at public newsstands.

The chief aim of the study was to show the strength and the weakness of the program in vogue, as judged by the evaluation of the data gathered, in the light of the criteria named.

* A report read before The National Conference on Research in English, February 24, 1940, in St. Louis, Missouri.

Evans, Mary Louise, "Nationalism and Children's Readers." Unpublished Master's thesis, Ohio University, Athens, 1938.

A study of the history of the development of reading methods and content of readers in the United States reveals the following:

(1) The historical influence on reading content is evident; reading has developed from one aim to two groups of aims with numerous subdivisions.

(2) Scientific study has influenced changes in method, content and physical and mechanical make-up of the readers. The child is recognized as being more important than the method, and this everchanging social world has changed the social needs of the child. Primary readers which stress the desirable type of nationalism are now available to most schools. They stress similarities, interdependence, and common efforts as the normal trend of civilization between peoples.

(3) The schools of the United States have never consciously been geared to produce uniformity, and bring about any one social pattern.

The specific problem of this thesis is a study of evidences of nationalism in children's readers. Primary readers of the following countries were studied: Japan, Belgium, Holland, England, Scotland, Ireland, Poland, Russia, France, Germany, China, Switzerland, Norway, and United States.

Detailed charts give a thorough summary of ideals emphasized in the books of the countries studied.

Farr, Martha Livingston, "The Reading Preference of Primary Children." Master's thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1937.

Determines the preferences of children in fourteen primary classrooms, grades

1-3, for specific books which were available on reading tables. Classifies the 542 books used, and finds catholicity of interest in reading by the children studied.

Gunn, Jessie Mildred, "The Vocabulary of Fourth Grade Children's Themes." Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, 1937.

The purpose of this investigation was:

(1) to contribute data which will aid in determining the actual words used in school themes by fourth grade children; (2) to contribute information which will aid in discovering the frequency of use of different words; (3) to contribute information which will aid in making possible a comparison of the words used most frequently by adults in writing with those so used by children; and (4) to contribute information which may be of use in comparing the words frequently used by children in writing themes with those used by children in their written correspondence.

A total of 887 themes, with 61,432 running words and 30,454 different words, written by fourth grade pupils in four school systems in three different states were used in this investigation. There were 361 topics selected, covering the following major units: (1) communication, (2) health, (3) unspecialized practical labors, (4) citizenship, (5) social contacts and relationships, (6) general mental efficiency, (7) leisure occupations, and (8) religious activities.

A comparison was made of the words found in this investigation with those found in the Horn adult list and the vocabulary of children's letters compiled by McKee.⁶

From the data reported in this investigation it seems reasonable to draw the

⁶ McKee, Paul, "The Vocabulary of Children's Letters." Unpublished study, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, 1934.

following conclusions: (1) spelling needs of children seem to be well provided for by the adult list; (2) words used frequently by children as shown in this study would not adequately meet the needs of adult life; (3) as indicated by this investigation, the vocabulary of children's letters would provide adequately for the vocabulary needed in writing themes; and (4) no single investigation is complete and conclusive.

Heath, Helen Esther, "Errors in Capitalization Made by Pupils in Grades Four, Five, and Six in the Woodward, Oklahoma Public Schools." Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, 1939.

This investigation was undertaken with the purpose of answering the following questions: (1) What are the persistent errors in capitalization of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade pupils in the Woodward, Oklahoma Public Schools? (2) What grade differences, if any, are apparent in the capitalization errors of these children? (3) What sex differences, if any, are apparent in capitalization errors of these children?

To determine the answers of these problems, the writer gave the pupils twelve tests in which all capitalization was omitted, two letters as dictation exercises, and collected 705 compositions done by the pupils participating in the study and written in connection with other school studies.

The findings of this investigation indicate that the most persistent errors of omission in all three grades participating in the investigation were: (1) Failure to capitalize proper names, i.e., names of persons; (2) failure to capitalize the first words of sentences; (3) failure to capitalize the names of streets; (4) failure to capitalize the important words in the

titles of books; and (5) failure to capitalize the names of organizations to which children belong. The five most persistent errors of commission, i.e., errors due to the capitalization of words which should not have been capitalized were: (1) all words in the complimentary closings of letters; (2) unimportant words in the titles of books; (3) names of school subjects; (4) the titles of persons when they are used as common nouns; and (5) ordinals when they are used as the names of grades.

Hester, Katheleen Beatrice, "The Vocabulary of the Sixth Grade." Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1938.

Some of the outstanding features to be noted in the study are:

(1) The frequency of difficult words in the sixth-grade vocabulary. A total of 30,166 words not included in the first 6,000 of the Thorndike list are used in the eight basic textbooks for the sixth grade.

(2) The size of the sixth-grade vocabulary. A total of 10,963 different words make up the vocabulary. This is more than half the number of words Thorndike found in compiling words from many different sources.

(3) The large number of words appearing once only. Of the 4,963 words having an index number of seven or above, 2,274 were used only once. This includes 45.8 per cent of the list.

(4) The relatively small proportion of essential technical words. Five hundred fourteen, or 10.3 per cent, are considered important from the historical standpoint by Bedillion, while 724, or 14.5 per cent, are necessary for an understanding of world geography, according to Shaffer.

(5) The relatively small number of words upon which there is any agree-

ment by writers of different textbooks. Of the 4,963 words, only 1,769 are used by two or more textbook writers. These words make up the suggested sixth-grade vocabulary.

From a careful study of the results of the investigation, there appears to be an overwhelming burden placed upon the sixth-grade child by the use of uncontrolled vocabulary in the textbooks. To read with understanding only the basic textbooks for this grade would require the child to learn an average of 28 new words a day during the entire school term of 180 days. That task is entirely impossible and certainly not desirable.

Words used only once comprise 45.8 per cent of the total. This means that the child meets the word but one time while reading 663,546 words, thus affording a very slight chance for the word being learned.

The writers of the geography textbook place an unnecessarily heavy burden upon the child by the inclusion of a large number of difficult place names, many of which are not considered important from a geographical standpoint according to the study made by Shaffer.

The 1,769 words making up the sixth-grade vocabulary are by no means a final vocabulary for this grade. They are suggested as a list of words upon which the teacher may spend time since these words will be met by the child in two or more different sources.

Holderness, Jobie E., "A Study of the Recreational Reading of the Children in the Fifth and Sixth Grades in the Dunbar Elementary School, Tulsa, Oklahoma." Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, 1938.

The purpose of this study was to make a detailed analysis of the recreational

reading of the children in the fifth and sixth grades in the Dunbar Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This analysis included the following: (1) How reading ranked as a leisure-time activity of the children; (2) what books, magazines, and newspapers the children liked; and (3) what factors influenced their choice of reading materials.

The platoon system is used in the Dunbar school. There were 274 Negro children enrolled in the two grades; 155 in the fifth and 119 in the sixth. Reading charts were kept by these children for a period of four months. The children were also given a questionnaire. The material was tabulated in three groups, according to the intelligence of the children.

The findings showed that books were their first choice of reading material, magazines second, and newspapers third. The average time spent in recreational reading was 16.9 hours per week; the average number of books read was 30.5 per pupil; the average number of magazines read was 2.1, and the average number of newspapers was 1.1. The socio-economic factors apparently had little or no influence on the reading of the children. These fifth and sixth grade Negro children enjoyed reading adventure, travel, mystery, biography, humor, science, animal, and scout stories in the order named. Both sexes were greatly interested in stories about Negroes.

King, Mildred, "Implications of an Activity Program for Language Development of Pre-reading Levels." Ohio State University, Columbus, 1937.

The problem of this investigation was to discover the implications of the activity program for language development of pre-reading levels.

A survey of the educational principles governing the activity school and their results indicated that the activity school is conducive to the development of language in the young child.

There are many reasons for this. The entire program is planned with the child in mind. The laws of growth are applied; there is a desirable emotional climate which prevents tension; there are opportunities for varied and enriched experiences; there is an atmosphere of freedom; there is a desirable amount of responsibility; there is opportunity to manipulate, to explore, to experiment, to plan, to purpose, to execute, and to evaluate. Each day is full of new experiences.

Language development is dependent upon the number of the child's interests, the richness of experience, his association with other people, including both children and adults, the opportunities for expressing ideas, the reception of those ideas by others, and a perfectly adjusted personality.

Maximum language expressions are obviously more in evidence in those situations in which appropriate guidance is

exercised and in which there are found all of the conditions that are necessary for the optimum growth of the whole child.

Test results have shown that children with kindergarten experiences are superior in language development to those who have had no school experiences. Results also indicate that those children who have had two years of kindergarten are further advanced in certain phases of language development than the children who have had only one year.

However, since the number of children used in the test was small, these results should not be taken as final. More experimentation is needed in this field of actual experiences, their influence on language development, and on other related aspects of personality adjustment and growth.

This study warrants the conclusion that the activity program is contributing worthwhile experiences, which, with proper guidance, can bring about desirable results in language development on pre-reading levels.

(To be continued)

ETHICS IN FAIRY AND HOUSEHOLD TALES

(Continued from page 191)

Fourth, the very nature of these stories gives plenty of leeway for disregarding ethics, for they are told with the sole purpose of amusing or entertaining. There was no thought of instructing along any line, and certainly not in the field of ethics. They are not didactic in any way nor were they intended to be.

It would seem, then, that we cannot expect to find a code of ethics for our children in fairy tales. Since we cannot use them consistently in pointing out the road to perdition or the pathway to paradise, perhaps we should accept them for what they are—entertaining stories to while away the hours of childhood.

Editorial

An Issue No Longer to Be Dodged!

A NUMBER of articles in this number of *The Review* point to the varied benefits children may derive from recreational reading. Dr. Dora Smith suggests books as means of encouraging in children personal acceptance of worth. Dr. Goldsmith analyzes the value of literature in character training. Miss Montague indicates that the process of learning to read is made easier if the children are provided with attractive volumes during vacation. We teachers will agree readily with these statements; our problem is how to provide books.

In her report on English in the elementary schools of New York State (to be published by The National Conference on Research in English), Dr. Smith says, "More than 72% of the books read by elementary school pupils were secured from libraries, 61% from the school library and 11% from the public library." This, then, is the answer. There must be school libraries to meet the increasing needs of children who are not only learning to read, but who have a growing desire for books.

The modern school curriculum is provocative and energizing; children have more and more occasion to use books; their active life in the school room cannot be lived satisfactorily without books and the accessibility of a library.

The problem of establishing and maintaining school libraries, however, is far from simple. Diligent work, farsighted planning, and wise handling are necessary. Although a well-equipped, well-maintained, and properly serviced school library is not unreasonably expensive, it does require a definite initial outlay of money, and definite provision for maintenance.

And here is the rub. For while the idea of money for textbooks has been fairly well established, the idea of the purchase of school library books is not well understood or supported. The textbook is tied up with the hour-by-hour school life of Johnny and Betty. The textbook, is the concern of the individual parent, because it affects his own child. Cash for textbooks, therefore, is forthcoming.

Not so for library books. Library books are the concern of the parents collectively. The book that is in Johnny's hands today is read by some neighbor's child tomorrow. These books are a matter of public concern, and as a public matter, library maintenance should be by annual appropriation. It should be an annual item on the budget, along with teachers' salaries and building maintenance.

Many communities, eager for a school library but mistaking the nature of such an establishment, try heroically to secure it by raising a lump sum through entertainments, tag days, and the like. A few volumes may be obtained through such efforts, but not a library. Indeed, such activities, devoted and well-intentioned though they are, may actually confuse the issue and postpone the day when the public will see that a school library and library books are matters to be budgeted into the tax dollar.

The number of school libraries is comparatively small; but until a school has such a library, tax supported by regular appropriation, teaching in English, or indeed, in any other subject cannot be thoroughly effective.

Shop Talk

A SUMMER READING PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST GRADE

Most six-year-olds find learning to read a pleasurable and exciting experience. A continuation of this happy state of mind produces good readers, tingling with a sense of power over each season's new books.

Council Bluffs children rarely come from bookish homes. They are members of family groups finding recreation in some sort of activity. Pulled about from picnic in the car to movies, the lakes, and endless trips, these little folks seldom meet books as summer companions. By the end of August they have forgotten a large share of their hard-earned school skills. Fun out of books is being melted away by summer sun.

The group entering school in January is the weakest class of all. Leaving in June after one semester of reading, they often return in September utterly unable to carry on. Sometimes the teacher spends six weeks recovering lost ground, before the autumn work can be developed.

Two summers ago some of our first grade teachers made definite plans for summer reading continuation. Each school sent home notes to the parents, asking that they provide at least six books for home reading during the school holiday.

Miss Martha Currie of Second Avenue school wrote a letter, and enclosed a book list. Miss Currie introduced the library as the source of book supply. Miss Currie wrote:

"Because most of these children have now reached a place where they get much pleasure from independent reading—some, because reading is a new tool and it is fun to use a new tool, others for the information, excitement, and humor they find on the printed page—they would enjoy doing independent reading during the summer months. Some of the children are already getting books from the Free Public Library. They have brought them to school and have read them to us and other children

have wanted to know how they could get books too. If your child wants to do this, it is a splendid habit to encourage and establish for it gives him an enjoyable way to spend a few quiet minutes on hot days, and it helps to form a background for work he will do later in social studies.

"If your child does want to start a summer reading program it would be well to let him begin the first week after school is out, because as time passes the desire to do so becomes less and less keen. It would be interesting for him to keep a list of the books he has enjoyed and bring it to school in the fall to exchange comments with other children."

The Public Library co-operated by supplying sufficient copies of primers and pre-primers as well as easy picture-story books. The children's librarian or the school librarian handled all requests. Quite naturally parents, librarians and teachers joined hands to develop good readers in the first grade.

The summer reading project for primary children is now a definite part of our book buying program. Teachers confer with the librarian in the spring. Lists sent home recommend books that the library is able to supply. We are unable to avoid some duplication of school titles in a system where every reading table holds a variety of primers. We can draw attention to the very new titles, those not yet in use as texts in the school.

Children have derived more than reading skills from their summer's work. Many feel the library staff are their especial friends. Young mothers, who used the library in their own school days have returned to renew their cards. We all feel this to be our best and most profitable summer club.

—HELEN RUTH MONTAGUE
School Librarian
Council Bluffs, Iowa.



Lost Lagoon. By Armstrong Sperry. Doubleday, Doran

Turi of the Magic Fingers. By Henry Lionel Williams. Illus. by Harry Daugherty. Viking, 1939.

Turi is a boy of the stone age. He has been badly maimed in a fight with a bear, and is about to be clubbed to death by his father, who cannot stand the disgrace of having a son who is a cripple, when Turi's mother intercedes, and Turi is spared. He later becomes the pride of his father, for he can carve ornaments and scratch outlines of animals on stone or bones with flint. He can make weapons, too; and soon learns that to his tribesmen his art is magic.

In time he learns of the sacred cave, where the priest exercises his magic by making drawings of animals to be hunted. The priest is a sorcerer, and his drawings of bison or deer are thought to make these creatures easy to hunt. But Turi's art is greater than that of the priest because he can draw animals that seem alive and moving. He proves to be a successful hunter, too, and he trains the ancestor of the dog to help him hunt. The reader realizes that Turi possesses a deep and sympathetic interest in animals.

The author brings to life the ancient Cro-Magnons of 20,000 years ago. It is hoped that boys and girls of the upper grades

will come to know Turi of this story, the intelligent, courageous, and gifted son of the cave man, Ka-Gora, of Dordogne. Mr. Williams, who is a devoted scholar in this field, and a scientist, shows the dawn of human sympathy, co-operative endeavor, and artistic skill.

Cap'n Ezra, Privateer. By James D. Adams. Illus. by I. B. Hazelton. Harcourt, Brace. 1940, \$2.00. (PRIZE FOR OLDER CHILDREN. N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE)

Reviews and Abstracts

C. C. CERTAIN

The story opens in the Mount Monadnock region near Peterboro Hills, New Hampshire, in the decade before the War of 1812.

Dave and Billy are on their way to Boston, driving two herds of cattle. On the road they hear gossip about the trouble with the British. They learn that more than fifty ships are being built along the Merrimack, and "every doggone one of 'em to be armed for privateerin' when the war starts."

At Boston they encounter numerous adventures, and finally get work in Newburyport at Cap'n Ezra's shipyard, working on the schooner *Polly*. They are taught manners and acceptable speech by the Widow Greenleaf, with whom they live, and they study navigation and gunnery as well. When the *Polly* finally sails, they are members of her crew.

During the war, the *Polly* makes an extraordinary record as a privateer. The boys share many rich prizes taken on the high seas, but in none with so much satisfaction as the recapture of the Widow Greenleaf's ship, the Merrimack, which had been stolen by the British three years before.

The boys' interest in Miss *Polly* and Miss Nell gives a pleasant, unsenti-

mentalized romance to the story. Altogether the book is refreshing in its frank approval of worth of character and of good deeds, without degenerating into "sissiness" or flabby moralizing.

Little Whirlwind. By Margaret Ann Hubbard. Illus. by Dorothy Bayley. Macmillan, 1940. \$2.00.

Here is a book ostensibly for girls, but so vivid and so vigorous is the narrative that boys will enjoy reading it also. Certainly there can be no doubt about



Magic for bison

Turi of the Magic Fingers. By Henry L. Williams. Viking

this book's becoming a favorite in the upper elementary grades.

The story is about Chatty MacKenzie who, with her father and mother, little Duncan and Wee Jamie, live in the village of Pembino on the Red River of the North. The story begins with Chatty's twelfth birthday, and moves through escapades rather than by incident, for Chatty is in and out of tangles continually.

Major events include the breaking up of the village of Pembino; the trek to the Turtle River country—the country of the Chippewas and the Sioux; Chatty's friendship with the Chippewas, who were her playmates; the death of the Chippewa medicine man, who had befriended Chatty and had given her the name, Little Whirlwind; the danger to the village from hostile Sioux; and finally, Chatty's courageous journey for help.

Chatty's character is definite. She has warm impulsive sympathy, and quick understanding. One of the most interesting scenes in the book is that of the death and funeral of the Chippewa medicine man, Ga-Ga-Win, in which Chatty's character asserts itself admirably.

The author writes lucidly; her style is flexible and dramatic, and there is a sincerity about her that children will like. She evidently knows her subject thoroughly, for she lived on a Chippewa reservation. The book is wholesome and absorbing, and can be highly recommended.

Boy with a Pack. By Stephen Meader. Illus. by Edward Shenton. Harcourt, Brace, 1939. \$2.00.

This book makes a good start, unfolding a story about seventeen-year-old Bill Crawford, a dog, and a horse. The boy crosses Vermont, York State, Pennsylvania, and goes south into Ohio. The best of the tale is colored with the tavern life of the first part of the nineteenth century in America. Incidents are spiced with brawls, horse-racing, and with the excitement of travel by canal boat and stage coach a century ago.

The unity of the story is broken into to include a yarn about a Virginia slave catcher, and the machinations of the underground railway. In consequence, threads must be gathered together too mechanically in the end to bring it all to a satisfactory close.

Prairie Neighbors. By Edith M. Patch and Carrol Lane Fenton. Illus. by Carrol Lane Fenton. Macmillan, 1940. \$1.75.

Prairie Neighbors will help children become acquainted with the flowers and wild life in a vivid and pleasant way. This means a wide acquaintance, too, because so many of these creatures—hawks, red-winged blackbirds, the "sachet-pussy", the squirrels—are not solely prairie-dwellers. Much of the insect, animal and

plant life described here has a neighborly familiarity, but is more readily recognized than understood by most people; it is given a vivid introduction through these pages.

It is one of a series of books (*Mountain Neighbors*, *Desert Neighbors*, *Forest Neighbors*), and the authors have been at pains to cross-reference. The book is well indexed.

An observation made by John Buchan, in the opening chapter of his autobiography (*Atlantic*, May, 1940)—"Pilgrim's Way"—that country people do not know wild flowers and animals, suggests that this series should be made available in traveling libraries—county and state—for boys and girls in rural schools. Of course, such a book is of great value to city children.

The style is readable. Many of the animals are individualized—a trick that adds vividness and interest.

Nansen. By Anna Gertrude Hall. Illus. by Boris Artzybasheff. Viking, 1940. \$2.50. (HONORABLE MENTION, OLDER CHILDREN. N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE).

In these days of disillusion and sick uncertainty, a volume like this, outlining the life of a brave, humane, and modest man, is a spiritual restorative. For, as the author says in her concluding paragraph, "He was a great man; he will seem greater when . . . the world has had time to look back and see how high he towers above his times."

The author tells the story simply, emphasizing the high points, whether of adventure and exploration, or of humanitarian work. She avoids the mistake of making Nansen a colorless, perfect hero, admitting that he had his human quota of whims and eccentricities. Nevertheless, after two decades of "debunking" biographies, this is a sincere and welcome account of a great and lovable man.

Nansen's life was varied and adventurous enough to hold interest. There were his trip across the Greenland ice-cap; his voyage in the *Fram* to study the currents in the Arctic Ocean; his harrowing journey with one companion over Arctic ice toward the Pole, and the winter encampment on Franz Joseph Land; his services to his country in effecting a peaceful separation from Sweden; his renunciation of the scientific work he loved for the diplomatic service of his country; and finally, and most heroic of all, his efforts to establish the League of Nations as "a new ship, sailing a new course" and to help the famine sufferers in Russia and the pitiful refugees who wandered Europe and the Near East in the early 1920's.

The book is for older children and adults. There is little drama or sharp excitement in the narrative; instead the author manages, through accuracy and re-

straint, to convey the steadfastness and nobility of a man who, though Norway's particular hero, can take his place as a hero in any country.

Daniel Boone. By James Daugherty. With original lithographs in color by the author. Viking, 1939. \$2.50.

One of James Daugherty's earliest excursions into book illustration was Stewart Edward White's *Daniel Boone, Wilderness Scout*. White's book, prepared originally for the Boy Scouts, was not only an authoritative life of the great frontiersman, but a treatise on frontier life as well, and James Daugherty's pictures caught the robust tone of the text admirably.

Now comes Daugherty's own book about the character who is, above all, a boy's hero.

Daugherty's text is much shorter than White's, for he confines his story to Boone's life, and discusses frontier conditions only as they affect Boone. The text is compact, meaty, and very stirring, for Daugherty's style has the evocative qualities of great prose. For example, one cannot read, unmoved, his account of the procession of women from the stockade to the spring under the scrutiny of hostile Indians, waiting to attack the little settlement.

Both Daugherty's prose and his pictures invite comparison with Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*. The two books are alike in spirit, in subject-matter, and in vigor.

Boys and girls, young and old, will delight in this book. It is an inimitable picture book to the little ones, and a great American epic to those who are older.

Animals as Friends and How to Keep Them. By Margaret Shaw and James Fisher. Foreword by Julian Huxley. Illus. with photographs and diagrams. Dutton, 1940. \$2.50.

This book gives information about a great variety of animals that might make good pets—mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates. In addition, there are chapters on "Cats and Dogs in General" and on "Waifs and Strays."

The title of the book may be taken literally. The authors have come about as near realizing their aims as any writers could. Well organized, accurately and liberally indexed, the book is an encyclopedia of ready information, both practical and scientific, about pets. But to say merely that the book is encyclopedic is to say too little, and to say it badly, for few books could reflect more charmingly than this one does the spirit of its authors and of the people they represent.

When Julian Huxley states in the Foreword that "the size of the pet population of Great Britain appears to be at least as great as that of the human population," he states a significant fact. When he declares that "the keeping of pets is a very desirable habit," and continues with the assertion that "apart from providing entertainment and occupation, it tends to make people more humane," he is speaking like a true Briton, for no people on earth seem to love animals as do the British.

The authors, Margaret Shaw and James Fisher, are not only British, but one, Miss Shaw, is an editor of the *Animal and Zoo Magazine*, an official organ of the Zoological Society in England, and James Fisher is a biologist and assistant curator at the London Zoo.

This book should be in the personal library of all who are interested in animals as pets, and in every school library as a reference book.

Tembo, the Forest Giant. By J. W. Wilwerding. Illus. by the author. Macmillan, 1939. \$2.00.

This story of an East African elephant, who became almost a legend for his great size and cunning, is told from the animal's point of view. The fabulous size of Tembo's tusks made him the object of hunters, but his sagacity saved him and his herd repeatedly. When Tembo is about 85 years old, he gains safety under protective hunting laws.

The book is replete with hunting lore; the author's own safaris and stories of hunters and native trackers furnish the material. Both in pictures and in text, the author-illustrator gives a convincing description of the Tanganyika and Kilimanjaro districts.

Authoritative, well written, and illustrated, and fascinating in subject-matter, this is a book for boys and girls from twelve years on. Tembo is an animal hero to capture a reader's imagination.

Ho for Californy! By Enid Johnson and Anne Merriman Peck. Decorations by Anne Merriman Peck. Harper, 1939. \$2.00.

This is one of many recent juvenile books with American historical background.

The characters have a quaintness amounting almost to the fantastic under some circumstances. The readability of the book depends much on this, for the narrative itself is not followed with uniform ease and zest by the reader, especially the younger reader. At times the tale lags too much from the heaviness of exposition.

Young Timothy Worth, a Nantucket Quaker, is the first in his community to feel the gold fever in



Boy with a Pack. By Stephen Meader. Harcourt, Brace

1848. There is a threefold shifting of scene: first the home port of Bedford; second the long journey by sea to Chagres, across the Isthmus of Panama, thence up to the gold country of California; and finally the gold country itself.

The route taken is a difficult one, and there are long delays and tragedy, for Timothy Worth's father dies of fever. The others—Worth, Pelig Adams, Terry Dale, and a jolly clown known as Juggles, struggle along. It is the latter two—Terry and Juggles—who save the day by their schemes and pranks.

The book presents a drab picture of the gold rush in California. Here, as in earlier parts of the book, reading is at times somewhat tedious, except for precocious children who may feel a curiosity about the gold-mad days.

On the Staked Plain (El llano estacado). By Eric P. Kelly. Illus. by Harve Stein. Macmillan, 1940. \$2.00.

Here is a vigorous mystery and detective story, thoroughly plausible, and outstanding for literary style and technique. The scene is the Texas Panhandle and the story concerns hidden gold, treachery, ambush by Comanche Indians, mistaken identity, and solution of a mystery ninety years later by a high school girl.

Not once does Eric Kelly let the reader down. The narrative moves with all the speed that sensation-loving boys and girls could desire, and at the same time the story is based on careful scholarship as the notes and afterword testify.

This is one of the best books of the spring.

Lost Lagoon. A Pacific Adventure. By Armstrong Sperry. Illus. by the author. Doubleday Doran, 1939. \$2.00.

In this adventure story for older children, a boy, about to leave the South Sea Islands for America to



"GET READY." THE MEN RAISED THEIR GUNS.

On the Staked Plain. By Eric Kelly. Macmillan

enter college, becomes, involuntarily, involved in a treasure hunt, in company with another young man just out of college. A German tramp ship, sunk during the World War with a cargo of gold is the object of their search.

Desperados, tropical storms, treachery, and a fight with sharks, furnish excitement. The book stimulates a certain amount of interest in pearls, shells, and archaeology. It is a lively and wholesome story, and one which will hold a boy's interest.

Mechanically, the book is handsome; the illustrations by the author are beautiful.

Highroad to Adventure. What Happened to Tod Moran When he Traveled South to Old Mexico. By Howard Pease. Illus. by Frank Dobias. Doubleday Doran, 1939. \$2.00.

A current international problem furnishes the background for this book of high adventure—the expropriation of foreign oil and mineral holdings in Mexico.

The leading characters are an American boy and the son of a Mexican landowner who has been ruined by the treachery and sharp practice of Mexican and American agents. The author takes a sympathetic view of Mexico's problem.

The book is frankly an adventure story, with enough mystery and thrills to hold the attention of boys in the upper grades.

Dirk's Dog Bello. By Meindert DeJong. Illus. by Kurt Wiese, Harper, 1930. \$2.00.

Last fall something new appeared in children's books—the story of a little boy, a dog, and a windy fishing village on the Frisian coast. The book was unusual for insight into the characters and into the life of a community; unusual for its style with implicit humor, drama, and individuality; and unusual for the interest it holds for children readers. It was entitled, *Dirk's Dog Bello* and its author was Meindert DeJong.

At once I wanted to learn more about the author. This, however, proved difficult, for his publishers had little biographical material, and a letter to the author himself only brought courteous thanks and the modest confession that he was ignorant of child education. He added, "If possible, I know even less about child literature. I have read exactly two juveniles in my lifetime, both by Meindert DeJong. I had to read those, you see, and there it is! I just happen accidentally to have a knack for writing juveniles—merely that and nothing more. It seems you need no other equipment, fortunately for me!"

Persistent further inquiry, however, brought this added biographical sketch:

I was born in the village of Wierum, Province of Friesland, the Netherlands, March 4, 1910. I came to America in 1918 at the age of eight. Settled in Grand Rapids, Mich., where I have lived ever since—Grand Rapids, besides its furniture, being noted for its enormous Dutch population—except for very brief periods in Wisconsin and Iowa. I was educated at the local religious schools maintained here by the Dutch Calvinists, and received my A. B. degree at their only institution of higher learning, John Calvin College, also at Grand Rapids. Attended the University of Chicago for a while, when luckily I could duck out of any further and higher education. Married, but no children. Have held a variety of jobs ranging from grave digger in a cemetery to college professor. Preferred the digging. In between those jobs I also sandwiched

such occupations as mason, tinner, and installer of warm-air furnaces, and poultry farmer. I was a farmer all during the depression, but the chickens failed me, and I am now employed on the Federal Writer's Project. In fact, I am the Federal Writers' Project in Grand Rapids, being the lone survivor of some thirty would-be writers.

The style of *Dirk's Dog Bello* is very flexible. Incident flows from personal exploits; plot and character are intertwined so completely that the whole point of view of the narration is Dirk's. The other characters, old Tjerk, the grandfather, Widow Detjen, the mother, Siebrig, and little Bet, the sisters, and mighty Pier, Dikke Trien, Aage the Roamer, every one, to the women of Wierum themselves, are magically the folk of Dirk's world. And so it is with Bello, the Great Dane—he is Dirk's dog.

This book is a masterpiece of juvenile literature for the simple reason that the reader, too, gets into the consciousness of young Dirk, and its spell of reality wells up as if from a portrait of Rembrandt or Franz Hals. Therefore, be the reader boy or man, he is as one with Dirk in this story.

The character of Dirk has been drawn with force and dignity, and more than that, for Dirk is alive and real. The vividness of the book, its realism—makes one wonder if Meindert DeJong might not have added to his brief biography the confession that he, like Dirk, has sat in the "spider corner" of the church at Wierum, and shaken the cake tree in the Wierum school. Boys and girls, too, will like the book for its directness and honestly childlike viewpoint, for its exciting incident, and for the large part the dog occupies.

Meindert's brother David DeJong to whom the book is dedicated ("To my brother, Dave, with some reluctance") is well known in the field of adult literature.

At Midsummer Time. A Story of Sweden. By Emma L. Brock. Illus. by the author. Knopf, 1940. \$1.50.

The Midsummer Festival as seen through the eyes of nine-year-old Sigrid. Miss Brock catches the gaiety of the festival in the narrative rather more successfully than she does in her drawing. She makes too much of little sister's lisp ("Oh Thigrid," is almost the extent of Kari's conversation).

The book belongs in the information-in-story-form category. The Swedish home-life and festivals described are, of course, charming.

The Littlest House. By Elizabeth Coatsworth. Illus. by Macmillan, 1940.

The story is that of three children who are allowed the use of a house during the summer. This theme appeals strongly to little girls who almost universally long to manage a house, free from adult direction. Interest would have been heightened had the author given

more details of the housekeeping; such details have enhanced books ranging from *Swiss Family Robinson* to Rankin's *Dandelion Cottage*.

Mrs. Coatsworth is a poet, and her sensitiveness to language gives distinction of style, individualizes the characters, and evokes the atmosphere of a sea-port town. The book, however, is linear narrative, without plot, and so appeals only to a limited group of young readers.

The Singing Tree. Written and illus. by Kate Seredy. Viking, 1939. \$2.00.

In an article on Kate Seredy (*Elementary English Review*, October, 1938) Blanche Jennings Thompson emphasized Miss Seredy's hatred of war. The counterpart of this quality—the love of peace and the recognition of common humanity—is the theme of this book.

The story begun in *The Good Master* continues. The peaceful routine of the Hungarian farm, and the lives of Kate and Jansi, Uncle Sandor and Marton (the Good Master) and Mother are disturbed by the first World War. But only compassion exists in the farmhouse, and many people—enemies and allies alike—find sanctuary and peace in the Nagy home, held together by Mother Nagy. A beautiful story.

The Eagle's Quest. A prince's Flight for Freedom. By Charlotte Lederer. Illus. by the author. Doubleday, Doran, 1939. \$2.00.

Since this novel contains all the elements of romance—a disinherited prince ignorant of his parentage, a cause kept alive by devoted followers, a beautiful princess, older girls will like it. The Hungarian fight for freedom in the eighteenth century is the subject.

Other People's Houses. By Margery Bianco. Viking, 1939.

Dale Forrest, alone in New York without any particular training, must find work. Her experiences as companion to a wealthy eccentric, as maid-of-all-work, as waitress in a Village tea room, as governess, make interesting reading for girls of twelve to fifteen, for they are written with sympathy and a shrewd understanding of human foibles. Dale stands out as a likeable, well-bred, courageous girl. As might be expected of Mrs. Bianco's books, there is a depth of human wisdom here that makes it more than the story of a girl looking for a job.

No Vacancies. By Gertrude E. Mallette. Illus. by Herbert Morton Stoops. Doubleday, Doran, 1939. \$2.00.

Brenda Garrett needed a job, and when none was to be had, she managed to create one, as substitute manager of the apartment building where her family lived. How she met the problems that arose, and how she managed to enjoy her job make the story. The book lacks the literary distinction of Mrs. Bianco's story, but contains much sensible information on apartment-house management. Girls of high school age will like it.



Ho for Californy! By Johnson and Peck. Harper

The Red Keep. A Story of Burgundy in the Year 1165. By Allen French. Illus. by N. C. Wyeth and Andrew Wyeth. Houghton Mifflin, 1938. \$2.25.

The action, idealism, suspense, and romance in the story will make it delightful reading for twelve and fifteen-year-olds. Young Conan of Prigny is the hero; and the heroine is Anne d'Arcy, whose fief, the Red Keep, has been burned by the marauding Sauval family. How Anne and Conan, with the help of members of the Mason's Guild and Anne's loyal retainers, regain and rebuild the Red Keep furnishes plenty of action and a well-defined picture of life in a feudal castle, and in a mediaeval city.

Fighting Fire. By Captain Burr Leyson. Foreword by Commissioner John J. McElligott. Illus. Dutton, 1939. \$2.00.

This book is full of action and is packed with authentic information on fire fighting in New York City. Thirty-six full-page illustrations give somber reality to the text. These pictures are printed in the shade of fire-red so unforgettably familiar to anyone who has ever seen burning buildings at night.

The reader rides with the firemen, and follows them making "thrilling and heroic rescues" as the author declares he did. But the book is more than an exciting story; it is a fine achievement in the writing of technical exposition, for everything is clearly and vividly explained, from the "smoke-eaters" to the high pressure system. The book should be in every school library.

The Faraway Trail. By Charlie May Simon. Illus. by Howard Simon. E. P. Dutton, 1940. \$2.00. HONORABLE MENTION, YOUNGER READERS, N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE.

The Blair family—the father, grandmother, and three children—follow the westward trail from Tennessee to Arkansas, for the westerning instinct is strong in them. They settle in Arkansas, clear land, build a double cabin with a “dog-run,” and plant crops. But the faraway trail still calls Luke, the son, and he goes to California. Katie Lou, the gentle elder daughter, marries and moves to an easier life in Little Rock, and only Savannah, the youngest, is left on the farm she loves. In the end, though, the family is reunited.

The book conveys deep family affection, and paints a convincing picture of pioneer life—the husking bees, house raisings, and visits from peddler and circuit judge. Especially noteworthy is the discreet suggestion of mountain dialect which adds much to the flavor and enjoyment of the book.

Pottery of the American Indians. By Helen E. Stiles. Illus. with photographs. Endpapers, jacket, and line drawings by Marion Downer. Dutton, 1939. \$2.50.

The illustrations are well-chosen and should be of great value to art classes as well as to the child looking up material on the culture of Central and South America. The writing is somewhat uneven. Interesting chapters are those on the life of the Chimu and Naxca peoples of Peru as shown by their pottery, and on Aztec Pottery. There are translations of Navajo, Tewa, and Peruvian hymns. One wishes that the author had explained more clearly just in what good design does consist.

The Sword of Roland Arnot. By Agnes Danforth Hewes. Illus. by Paul Strayer. Houghton Mifflin, 1939. \$2.50.

Agnes Danforth Hewes can be counted on for an exciting story, well told. This tale concerns a fifteenth-century Frankish merchant, Jacques Arnot, and his son, Phillippe, who live in the ancient city of Damascus the better to direct their caravans. One of these caravans is attacked and looted by a tribe of Bedaween,

partly through the merchant's refusal to pay tribute. Young Phillippe's adventure, and the eventual understanding he brings about between his father and the Shayk of the powerful Ruwalla tribe, make an excellent story for boys.

Miss Hewes has lived twelve years in Syria, and writes vividly and well of the country. She seems thoroughly informed, too, on the history of the middle ages.

The Copper Kettle. Annette Turngren. Illus. by Dorothy Bayley. Nelson, 1939. \$1.50.

Life in a Swedish pastorage in the middle of the last century. Many details, and, one assumes, accurate information about the life of the time and place, and some characterization. The story lacks excitement which is essential to many young readers.

Runaway Prentice. The Story of Jeffrey, Susan, Tris, and Tibby in the Year 1800. By Ethel Parton. Illus. by Margaret Platt. Viking Press, 1939. \$2.00.

Miss Parton has demonstrated repeatedly her ability to re-create periods in our history—to vivify them in the homely details of daily living. In this book, it is the year 1800, when the Barbary Pirates were enslaving Yankee seamen. The setting is Newburyport. Although the book is valuable for authenticity, it lacks vigorous and fast action.

The Island Mystery. By Waldo Fleming. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard and Co., 1939. \$1.50.

The setting is an Aegean island, and the heroes are two young fishermen. Only fair.

Singing Bird. By Janet Ramsay. Illus. by Ruth King. Nelson, 1939. \$1.50.

A novel for girls. The plot concerns the effort of Alice to prepare for an operatic career. An interesting addition to the “career” books for girls.

Oh Susannah. By Ruth and Richard Holberg. Illus. by the authors. Doubleday, Doran, 1939. \$1.50.

The Holbergs re-create, in story and pictures, the 1870's. Part of the story takes place in Minneapolis—a new town—and part in Vermont. The book is noteworthy, although not up to *Wee Brigit O'Toole* or *Mitty and Mr. Syrup*, by the same authors.

Among the Publishers

Allyn and Bacon.

Adventures in English. By David Sinclair Burleson and Laurie Cash. Illus. Grade four, 1939. Grade five, 1940.

E. P. Dutton.

Rehearsal for Safety. A Book of Safety Plays. By Fanny Venable Cannon. Foreword by Edward J. McLaughlin. 1939. \$1.00.

Economy Company.

Glad Days. A Rhythmic Reader. By Mamie H. Whittaker and Rebecca Smith. Illus. by Bruno L. Lore. 1939.

Ginn and Company.

Achievement. By Tom Peete Cross, Reed Smith, Elmer C. Stauffer, and Elizabeth Collette. 1930-1938. \$1.96 (High School).

D. C. Heath and Co.

Pinocchio (adapted from Collodi). Told by Dorothy Walter Baruch. Illus. by the Walt Disney Studio. 1940. 68c.

Here They Are. Told by Andrea Wavle. Illus. by the Walt Disney Studio. 1940. 68c.

Suggestions for Teachers of Reading. By Carol Hovious. 1940. 60c (paper).

Houghton Mifflin Company.

The Child Development Readers:

Reading for Fun. By Julia Letheld Hahn. Illus. by Berta and Elmer Hader and Dorothy Handsaker. 1939. 60c.

Finding Friends. By Julia Letheld Hahn. Illus. by Decie Merwin and Kayren Draper, 1939. 76c.

Making Visits. By Julia M. Harris. Illus. by Constance Whittemore, 1939. 84c.

Meeting Our Neighbors. By Jennie Wahlert and Julia Letheld Hahn. Illus. by Marguerite Davis and Hildegard Woodward. 1939. 88c.

Teaching Reading to Slow-Learning Children. By Samuel A. Kirk and Marion Monroe. Houghton Mifflin, 1940. \$1.50.

The Macmillan Company.

Let's Go Ahead. By Arthur I. Gates and Jean Ayer. Illus. in color by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge and others. 1940. \$1.32.

Let's Look Around. By Arthur I. Gates and Jean Ayer. Illus. in color and black and white by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge and others. 1940. \$1.00.

Let's Travel On. By Arthur I. Gates and Jean Ayer. Illus. by Cyrus LeRoy Baldridge and others. 1940. \$1.20.

Step by Step in English. By Frederick H. Bair, Elma A. Neal, Inez Foster, and Ollie P. Storm. 1940:

Fun with Words (Grade 3). Illus. by Meg Wohlberg. 80c.

With Tongue and Pen (Grade 4). Illus. by Jessie Gillespie. 88c.

Words and Their Use (Grade 5). Illus. by Zhenya Gay. 96c.

Better English Usage (Grade 6). Illus. by Meg Wohlberg. 96c.

Row, Peterson Company.

Best Short Stories for Boys and Girls. Sixth Collection. Selected and compiled by Carol Rylie Brink. With new illustrations. 1940. \$1.20.

Scott, Foresman and Company.

Without Machinery. By Paul R. Hanna, Gladys Potter, and William S. Gray. (Curriculum Foundation Series), 1939. 92c.

Silver Burdett and Company.

Unit-Activity Reading Program: Intermediate Readers: By Nila Banton Smith and Stephen F. Bayne. *Distant Doorways* (Book 4). Illus. by Janice Holland and others. 1940. \$1.12.

Frontiers New and Old (Book 5). Illus. by Neil O'Keefe and Nicholas Riley. 1940. \$1.12.

On the Long Road (Book 6). Illus. by Robert A. Cameron. 1940. \$1.12.

On the Trail with Lewis and Clark. By Bonnie G. Howard. Assisted by Ruth Higgins. Illus. by Paul Launc. 1939. 96c.

Benj. H. Sanborn.

Read Another Story. By Marjorie Pratt and Mary Meighen. Illus. by Carol Critchfield. 1939.

Long Long Ago. By Marjorie Pratt and Mary Meighen. Illus. by Carol Critchfield, 1939.

H. W. Wilson Company.

Radio Roads to Reading. Library Book Talks Broadcast to Girls and Boys. 1939. \$2.25.